

# LOUISIANA *Conservationist*

January-February 1983



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Jesse J. Guidry, Secretary

## comments...

The most serious, seemingly inexorable, threat to many of Louisiana's coastal wildlife and fisheries resources today, and in the years immediately ahead, is the relentless and accelerating loss of approximately 40 square miles of coastal marsh annually.

This progressive marshland loss is a menace to the state's multi-million-dollar seafood, fur, and alligator resources. It is an ongoing gnawing away at the nation's most valuable winter habitat for waterfowl and many other species of migrating birdlife.

The coastal acreage being lost to erosion, saltwater intrusion, subsidence, and other factors represents the world's most viable and productive estuarine area. It contains roughly 25 percent of the nation's estuaries.

This rich coastal zone, now in jeopardy, is undoubtedly the most productive in the United States. It includes approximately 2.5 million acres of fresh to saline marsh, 1.8 million acres of ponds and lakes, and 2.2 million acres of bays and estuaries.

Louisiana's coastal marshes and estuaries nurture and support vast marine resources. They represent the primary nursery grounds for a preponderance of the shrimp, oysters, crabs, and fish caught in coastal waters along the northern Gulf of Mexico.

These fisheries produce over 25 percent of the total commercial catch in the U.S. every year. The dockside value of Louisiana fisheries landings in 1981 was \$193,000,000. In poundage, state landings accounted for 3.2 billion pounds of commercial catch, making the state the first in the nation.

Menhaden, an estuarine-dependent species, led the list with 1.17 billion pounds, valued at \$39 million.

This tremendous fisheries catch is a remarkable indicator of the productivity of the coastal marshes and estuaries. It looms even greater when one takes into consideration that vast catches made in Louisiana waters are landed in Texas, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, and are not reflected in those staggering statistics.

With the greatest part of Louisiana's fur-trapping industry located in the coastal parishes, those threatened marshes produce most of the state's harvest of fur pelts. Louisiana leads the nation with 25 percent of the U.S. production of wild fur, and supplies over 95 percent of North America's nutria skins, and 10 percent of its muskrat production.

The harvest of surplus alligators, centered predominantly in the coastal parishes, brings trappers an additional \$2 million a year. Its future is hinged greatly to the fate of the coastal marshes.

The accelerated land loss along the Louisiana coast that has now reached crisis proportions did not occur overnight, and remedial action will take a long time.

Interacting factors contributing to the loss of the land along the coast include both natural and manmade causes.

Natural causes include sea level rise, lowering of the land surface, and erosion. Land surface elevations in the low intradelta basins along the coast are barely above mean tide, making those areas vulnerable to wave attack.

Barrier islands such as Timbalier, Grand Isle, Grande Terre, and Isles Dernieres provide natural protection from storm surge and hurricanes, but

they are rapidly eroding. Also, tidal passes between barrier islands are widening, to the detriment of the estuaries and coastal marshes. As passes widen, marshes bordering the estuaries are exposed to saltier water and ravaging storms from the gulf.

Human activities in the coastal zone have promoted and accelerated land loss. The mining of petroleum, gas, salt and sulphur from underground may be causing the land to sink.

Land loss has been hastened by levee construction along the Mississippi River and its distributaries. Wetlands are maintained by rivers that carry sediment and nutrients from the uplands. Under natural conditions, those sediments are dispersed throughout the wetlands, sustaining the continuous, healthy growth of marsh ecosystems. But channelization of the rivers with levees has shunted those sediments seaward into the gulf. Land-building has almost ceased except in Atchafalaya Bay and a few other areas.

The dredging of canals in the marshes has resulted in much land loss. Years of use has caused them to widen as wave wash eats at the soft marsh soil.

Act 41 of the 1981 special session of the Louisiana Legislature established the Coastal Protection Trust Fund and appropriated \$35 million into it for projects to combat erosion, saltwater intrusion, subsidence, and land loss along the Louisiana coast.

Early in 1982, Governor Treen established a Coastal Protection Task Force. It has the primary purpose of demonstrating the use of techniques to control erosion, to restore and nourish barrier islands, to deter saltwater intrusion, and to demonstrate land-building and nourishment programs, to remedy this broadening land loss along the Louisiana coast.

As a member of the Governor's task force, I urge you to read a special article that will appear in the March/April issue of the *Louisiana Conservationist*. It will tell you about the task force and its program of action to deter and remedy the annual coastal land loss.



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# Camp Hunting for Ducks

Story and Photography  
By McFadden Duffy

**There's something about camp hunting during the duck season that adds new dimensions to the sport of waterfowling. There's memorable camaraderie. Along with game, fish and crabs for the taking, a comfortable camp provides a basic ingredient for real outdoor pleasure.**

We reached Steve Redmann's camp about two hours before sunrise, unloading the guns and gear from the trunk of the car into the waiting bateau in the brightness of the car's headlights.

Then Steve backed the car up the dirt and shell road about a hundred yards and parked it so it wouldn't block others who might want to unload at the rickety dock.

While he stored the car, Paul Schneider and I rearranged the ice chests and gear in the boat so that everything would be more shipshape when we crossed the bayou to the camp. Paul, an attorney, is Steve's nephew and has hunted at the camp for many years.

We knew that Woods Allen, Dick Juge and his son Richard were already at the camp. We'd seen Allen's pickup truck and Juge's van parked on the edge of the shell road when we arrived. Stephen, Steve's son, had driven down with Woods Allen.

"Hope they have been getting things ready while they waited for us," Steve said with a laugh as he climbed into the boat.

Paul pushed the bateau away from the dock and we started paddling across the bayou and around the bend that screened the camp from sight. I smiled in the darkness.

I knew exactly what he meant by getting things ready. There's a routine to getting ready for a duck hunt at Steve's place that had evolved from years of practice.

As soon as ice chests are stored on the big screened porch, shoes are exchanged for hipboots and the scenario unfolds with clocklike precision.

Two men unfasten the locks on the chains securing the seven, stacked,

side-ended pirogues and they are quickly carried to the sloping bank of the mosquito canal leading to the marsh ponds in back of the camp.

While a couple of hunters are getting the pirogues ready, others are carrying sacks of decoys, paddles, push poles, cushions and marsh seats to the pirogues.

Clumps of palmetto leaves are placed in the sterns of the pirogues, to patch the main blinds if necessary, or to build suitable blinds along the shoreline.

In less time than one would imagine, guns and shell buckets are placed in the pirogues and the hunters are ready to head for the big lagoon.

In some ways, those preparations are ritualistic, but everyone who hunts there soon learns the routine. It's almost amazing how quickly everything necessary for a successful hunt materializes.

By the time we reached the little landing and began unloading the boat most of the preparations were over. Woods Allen was filling the last pirogue stern with an armful of palmetto leaves.

It took only a few minutes to put the remaining two ice chests on the porch and change into hipboots. Then the three of us were outside and Steve suggested we get started.



**Dense stands of palmettos make up much of the understory growth beneath the oaks and hardwoods on the chenier where the camp is located.**

One by one, the hunters in pirogues left the sloping bank and disappeared down the 10-foot-wide mosquito canal, leaving the camp and its powerful mercury vapor light.

I stayed close to Steve, keeping the bow of my pirogue almost touching the stern of his, so we could talk as we made our way down the narrow canal.

"I'm going to put you in one of the big blinds," he told me. "You ought to get some good shooting. I'll be just a few hundred yards away. Dick and Richard are going to use palmettos and blind-up on that south point. Woods Allen will go to his favorite spot way across the lagoon, and Paul and Stephen will be between me and Allen."

When we reached a dead tree that jutted up grotesquely from the bank of the canal Steve paddled through a cut in the left bank and I followed him into a small lagoon. I laughed as I felt my paddle dig into soft mud.

"There's a lot of difference between the canals and the ponds," I commented. The mosquito canals, dug by Plaquemines Parish mosquito control workers, were about five feet deep. The lagoon was about a foot deep. Big difference!

"That's why those north winds play heck with our hunting during the second split. The later they make that second split, the worse it is for marsh hunters. North winds turn this country into mud flats," Steve remarked.

It was November 15, 1981, opening day of the first split in the east zone. There was a big silver moon and the slight chop on the water caused by a snappy southeast wind made the rippling water sparkle with dancing silver as we paddled along. Well off in front we could hear the soft conversation of the others and occasionally the sound of a paddle hitting the gunwale of a pirogue.

When we reached the open water of the big lagoon it was necessary to paddle faster to keep a straight course in the wind. I had little trouble following Steve. His silhouette was plainly visible against the rippling moonlit water. When we reached the first blind he paused so I could come alongside.

"You'll find it a good blind," he said, "comfortable to shoot from and good



**The broad spiked leaves of the palmettos with their sturdy stems are ideally suited for quick blind building.**

cover for your pirogue. If you want to, you can conceal it a little better with those palmettos. You'll find it better than shooting teal along the shoreline in that blind we built."

He was referring to my first hunt out of his camp in 1977. We'd needed a teal hunting story for the Louisiana Conservationist (See September Song, Fall Issue, 1977.)

He paddled off in the darkness and I went about the task of placing my decoys. Because of the bright moon, it was easy to get them just the way I wanted. In little more than 15 minutes, I had the decoys out and the pirogue in its slot alongside the raised platform, well concealed with a few additional palmetto leaves.

Sitting on my shell bucket, shotgun loaded, and a box of shells within easy reach, I sipped coffee and waited for the shooting hour. In the predawn darkness overhead, I heard the whisper of wings as ducks began moving about. Something plopped down in the decoys and I knew that shortly I'd be getting some action. I snuffed out the cigarette and softly screwed the cup/cover back on the small thermos.

It's really a sugar hole that Steve has. He's leased the marsh acreage and owned the camp for upwards of 18 years. The big lagoon, reached through interlocking small lagoons, is



**It's really a sugar hole that Steve has. He's leased the marsh acreage and owned the camp for upward of 18 years.**

studded with small grassy islands near the shoreline. They make excellent natural blinds, particularly when one has a dozen or so long-stemmed palmetto leaves.

When shooting time came I could tell the ducks that plopped down into my decoys were two teal. They'd moved back and forth among the decoys and were dabbling near the edge of the spread.

When I rose in the blind, the teal raced across the water and literally bounced into the air. They were going-away shots and I managed to drop one. The second teal gained altitude and moved in the direction of Steve's blind. I heard him fire and watched the duck fall.

I kept an eye on the teal I'd downed as it drifted back toward the decoys and watched for other ducks. It wasn't long before three wigeon made a pass at the decoys. They weren't shopping for a place to settle down, but were low enough when they swept across the decoys for me to bag two.

They splashed down well away from the outer edge of the decoy spread so I reloaded and made a quick trip in the pirogue to retrieve my ducks.

The next two hours were pleasant ones. When I finally cleared my shotgun, I had 10 ducks. They were

all 10-point ducks, but typical of the sort of gunning that Steve and his guests have on a regular basis. I had three teal, two blue-winged and one green-winged. I had those two wigeon, three pintails, and two gadwall.

That's a respectable bag of ducks in any man's neck of the woods. I'd seen a couple of big ducks circle and drop down into the dead cypress

swamp that filled one corner of the sprawling marsh. Mallards and mottled ducks seemed to like that area where the naked, dead cypress trees tell the mute story of saltwater intrusion, a problem in much of that part of Plaquemines Parish.

I sat in the blind finishing the last of the coffee and watching ducks come wheeling over to inspect my decoys and make a few passes over them, the way ducks do when the shooting is over, the way you'd wish them to behave when you still have some points left that could be filled out.

My companions had excellent shooting also. Throughout those two hours I'd heard their shots and rightfully assumed they were getting their share of action.

When the thermos was empty I paddled out and began picking up decoys, wrapping the cords about the necks and making them fast with the soft, pliable strips of lead that served as weights. When I'd finished and returned to the blind, I saw Steve gathering his decoys. Before long he reached my blind.

On the way back to camp Steve told me that he had a few teal, two pintails, wigeon and a mallard drake which had pushed him over the 100 points.

"Woods Allen and Stephen were doing a lot of shooting," he said, "so I'm certain they have the limit. Paul



**Heading in. On opening day Steve had a few teal, two pintails, wigeon and a mallard drake that pushed him over the 100-point mark.**



I took some pictures, making certain to get one of Stephen with his mallard drake and the rat redfish he'd caught in the canal leading to the camp.

went back to the camp early so I know he has the limit."

The south point of the big lagoon was deserted when we reached the cut leading into the small lagoons and eventually the mosquito canal. We knew that Dick and his son Richard were already back at the camp.

Steve Redmann's camp doesn't have a name. When you're talking about going there to hunt ducks or fish for reds and specks in nearby Lake Laurier, you're simply going to the "camp".

It should have a name because it is a rustic chunk of downright paradise tucked up on a chenier that borders the sprawling lacework of lagoons where we'd hunted.

Nestled under some oak trees that dribble acorns down on the tin roof of the camp during the fall, the screened porch is just a few steps from a bayou that provides a good mess of blue crabs for seafood gumbo, or an impromptu crab boil.

And, you don't have to make the 25-minute run to Lake Laurier if you'll be satisfied with a few redfish. Often, when the tides are right, there are redfish feeding on cocaho minnows in the mosquito ditches that border the



Most of the ducks taken at the camp are 10-pointers—teal, pintails, gadwall and wigeon. Occasionally there are mallards.

sprawling big lagoon. Those little killifish make excellent bait. They're hardy and will stay alive a long time. Putting the minnow traps out was one of the first chores Woods Allen had performed when he reached camp.

Steve called attention to a redfish striking a minnow as we made the turn from the last small lagoon into the

canal leading to the camp. When we reached the camp we learned that Stephen had exchanged gun for rod and taken a few minnows to successfully stalk a nice rat red he'd seen feeding at a spot in the ditch.

The camp itself is located at a place where the chenier makes an abrupt eastward turn, running for well over a



We formed an assembly line on the ducks. Those 10-pointers, for the most part, collected by seven hunters, make a big pile of ducks.



**We pulled some of the big wing feathers and then used the hot water and wax method, with everyone pitching in.**

mile before it ends at an area where the marsh has been drained and turned into pasture.

Dense stands of palmettos make up much of the understory growth beneath the oaks and hardwoods on the chenier where it runs to the east. It's there that the broad, spiked leaves are gathered for blind building.

There are rabbits and a few squirrels on the chenier, and Stephen has spotted deer tracks while gathering palmetto leaves on several occasions. The chenier, with its oaks, hardwoods, and understory growth, is one of those incongruous ridges that are in startling contrast to the marshes where they are found.

When we reached the little landing at the end of the mosquito canal, we found that everyone had been successful. I took some pictures, making certain to get one of Stephen with the rat red he'd caught near the landing by the camp, holding a mallard drake he'd shot with one hand and the fish in the other.

It was mid-morning so Steve went inside the camp and began rummaging in the various ice chests we'd brought. When he came outside again there was a huge pot of red beans with big chunks of ham slowly warming on the butane range, with an equally big pot

of rice being warmed in a big double boiler pot set.

We formed an assembly line on the ducks. Those 10-pointers for the most part, collected by seven hunters, make a big pile of ducks. We pulled some of the big wing feathers and then used

the hot water and wax method, with everyone pitching in until all the ducks have been cleaned and stored in ice chests.

I fixed a Scotch/Irishman's version of an Italian salad and then we crowded around the kitchen table to feast on the red beans, ham chunks and rice. Steve had brought French bread which we warmed in the oven.

With lunch behind us, I baited a half-dozen crab nets with fish heads that Steve had brought along from his home freezer and left to thaw out while we went duck hunting. I wanted the crabs to make seafood gumbo. It would be our supper. I had about four pounds of shrimp I'd brought, and all of the other ingredients, but I needed a mess of gumbo crabs.

While Paul tended the nets, Steve and I did the chopping, with onions and celery going into the big gumbo pot along with canned tomatoes, okra, and a large jar of prepared roux that had been made at home.

By the time we had all of the ingredients ready, Paul had about a dozen nice crabs. These were blanched in boiling water and cleaned, with claws and body halves going into the gumbo pot. We set the boiled, peeled and frozen shrimp aside to thaw, to



**The screen porch is just a few steps from a bayou that provides a good mess of blue crabs for seafood gumbo.**



**Cocaho minnows make good bait for specks and rat reds. Putting the minnow traps out was one of the first chores at the camp.**

be added later, and the big gumbo pot was put on a slow fire.

It had been a busy day but the prospect of trying for some speckled trout had special appeal for Steve and me. Richard and his father planned to walk the chenier and see if they could kick up some swamp rabbits that afternoon. Stephen and Woods Allen were going to take one of the boats and scout out a big chenier about two miles from camp. Stephen had seen some big deer tracks there the year before and he was planning on trying for a deer during the upcoming season.

Paul said he'd stay at the camp and stir the gumbo from time to time so Steve and I filled a bucket with cocaho minnows and made the run to Lake Laurier for a couple of hours fishing.

We managed to pick up about a dozen school trout around the grassy edges of the lake, and landed two additional rat reds. They were a trifle smaller than the one Stephen had caught in the mosquito canal.

Back at the camp we learned the rabbit hunters had jumped a couple of swamp rabbits and bagged one. As far as game and fish were concerned it had been a productive day. Between tending the gumbo and doing a few odd jobs around the camp, Paul had managed to catch a hamper of crabs that Woods Allen wanted to take home with him. They were covered with wet Spanish moss picked off one of the nearby oaks and would keep

well until the following afternoon when we headed home.

The evening passed quickly. We feasted on seafood gumbo with rice and French bread, fried trout and



**We managed to pick up about a dozen school trout around the grassy edges of the lake.**

fried redfish fingers, another salad, and a couple of apple pies that Mrs. Redmann had baked.

There was the usual good conversation and as the night grew late, one by one members of the hunting party drifted off to bed.

Sunday was a sort of re-run of Saturday, with good shooting on mostly 10-point ducks. We swapped around with the blinds and I shot from a palmetto leaf blind at the south point where Richard and his father had shot the day before. Woods Allen was the only person who hunted his same spot. I had learned no one complained about that because it was far away and the most difficult place to reach.

My first duck was a greenhead and I blew those 25 points willingly because they don't get too many mallards. By any standards, it was an excellent day for all of us.

Back at camp, with the decoys sacked and stored, and other gear neatly stashed away, we tackled the duck cleaning task with vigor. It was

early afternoon by the time we finished and settled down for lunch.

That consisted of cheese and ham on slightly stale French bread, washed down by cistern water or coffee. It was a meager meal compared to the feasting of the day before. Most camp hunters know that when the groceries start running out, it's time to head for home.

By mid-afternoon we'd ferried the guns, gear and ice chests down the bayou and across to the dock. The camp had been left clean and tidy, ready for the next visit.

Steve dozed as I drove home. It would be easy to put the finishing touches on the ducks and get them in the freezer. But there was something much more important than being well laden with game after a hunt. Camp hunting for ducks adds a new dimension to the sport of waterfowling. I guess you could say we lived mighty high on the hog that weekend.



**Steve also landed two additional rat reds that were a trifle smaller than the one Stephen caught in the canal.**



Bob Dennie

Wildlife

## CAPTURED IN GLASS

By Julia Murchison McSherry

**An Alexandria artist portrays Louisiana's wildlife in a unique art form: stained glass that transforms birds and animals into windows of lasting beauty.**

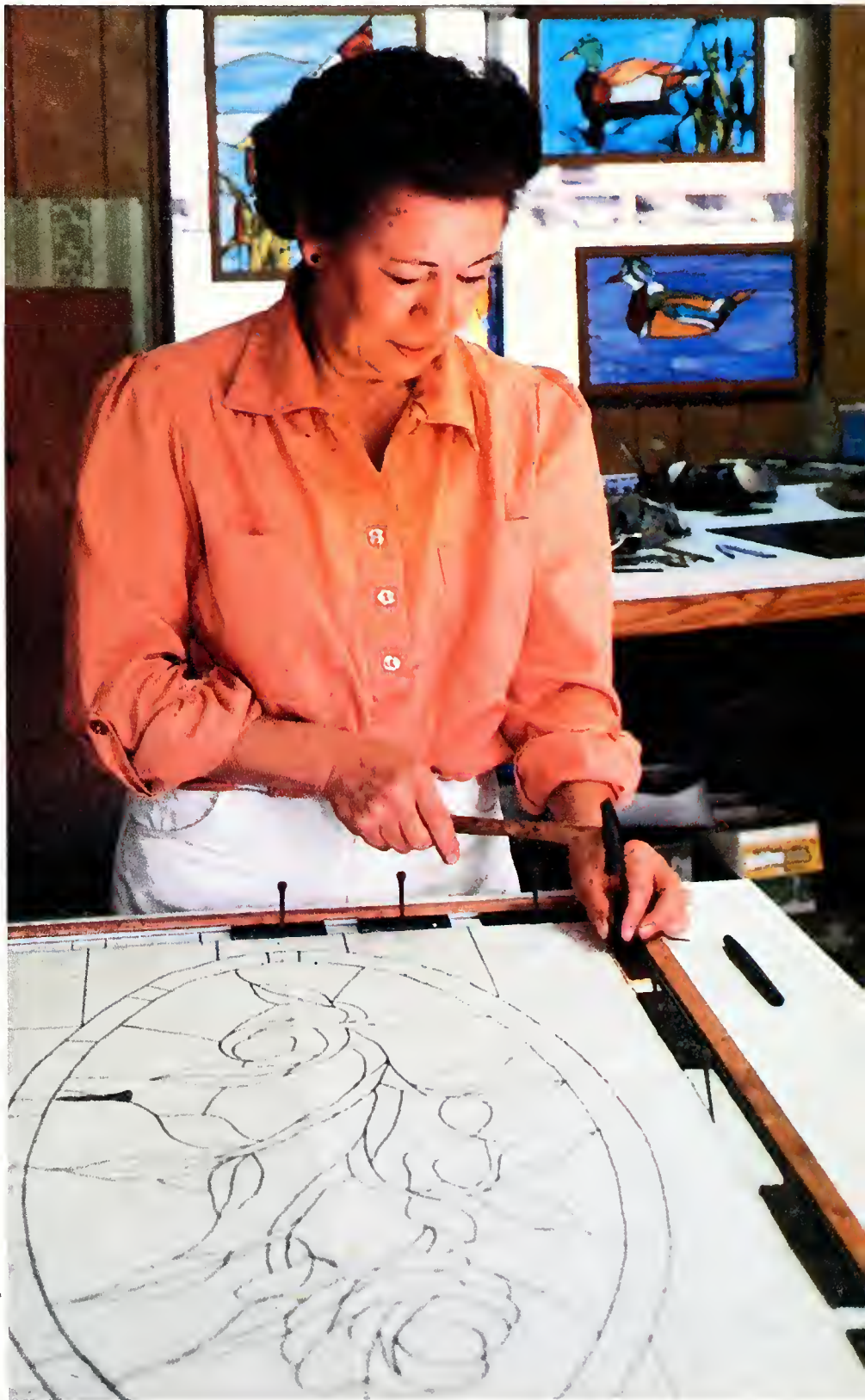
Ask Dot Eversull a question about wildlife and she's sure to light up with enthusiasm and mention her family's duck lease at Little Chenier near Lake Charles, her latest hunting venture in the marsh, or the recent family excursion to London where her son attended a famous shooting school. Her eyes twinkle and she loves nothing more than chatting about her love of wildlife and the outdoors. Only these days perhaps she has found a pastime she likes just as much as hunting: capturing wildlife in stained glass.

Louisiana Conservationist

Dot Eversull's stained glass wildlife creations mirror in detail her knowledge and appreciation of the outdoors. Each piece is meticulously crafted into beautiful art, collector's treasures. They take the form of decorative windows, custom designed to size, as well as lampshades, fireplace screens, and other forms. Through her art, Dot (Mrs. Eustis) Eversull creates perhaps a flying mallard in cattails, a wild turkey, redbirds, or a pelican, Louisiana's state bird. Not all of her work is wildlife but some of her most impressive pieces are.

This may be because of the special care that goes into the wildlife pieces. Her love of hunting and fishing is evident in the designs as she goes to great lengths to look for the right colored and textured glass for the bark of a tree, a marsh sky, or a turkey's head. She searches, through catalogs and visits across the country, for unusual glass, some from England, France, Germany, Korea, all over the world. She likes glass with unusual textures or defects that make it unique. Often, the glass in one piece of art is composed of different types and textures. Always, the glass changes colors depending upon placement and amount of sunlight coming through it. In early morning, the marsh sky in a window may look like a natural marsh sky; in evening hours, the color of the glass makes it reminiscent of a marsh sunset.

Each piece of art contains special treatment and details. "Not many people notice the mallard's curly tail feather," Mrs. Eversull points out as she displays one of the many details in a mallard window that make her work special. "And not many people, other than turkey hunters, realize how rough and bumpy and colorful a turkey's head is." She points to a photo of a turkey window that is now installed in the home of a Baton Rouge family. The glass she found for the head was perfect to represent the natural effect. She started with red and white glass and then fused crushed blue glass until she obtained the results she wanted. Only an artist who knows



Julia McSherry



Julia McSherry

In early morning, the marsh sky in a window may look like a natural marsh sky; in evening hours, the color of the glass makes it reminiscent of a marsh sunset.

her subjects well has such patience for detail.

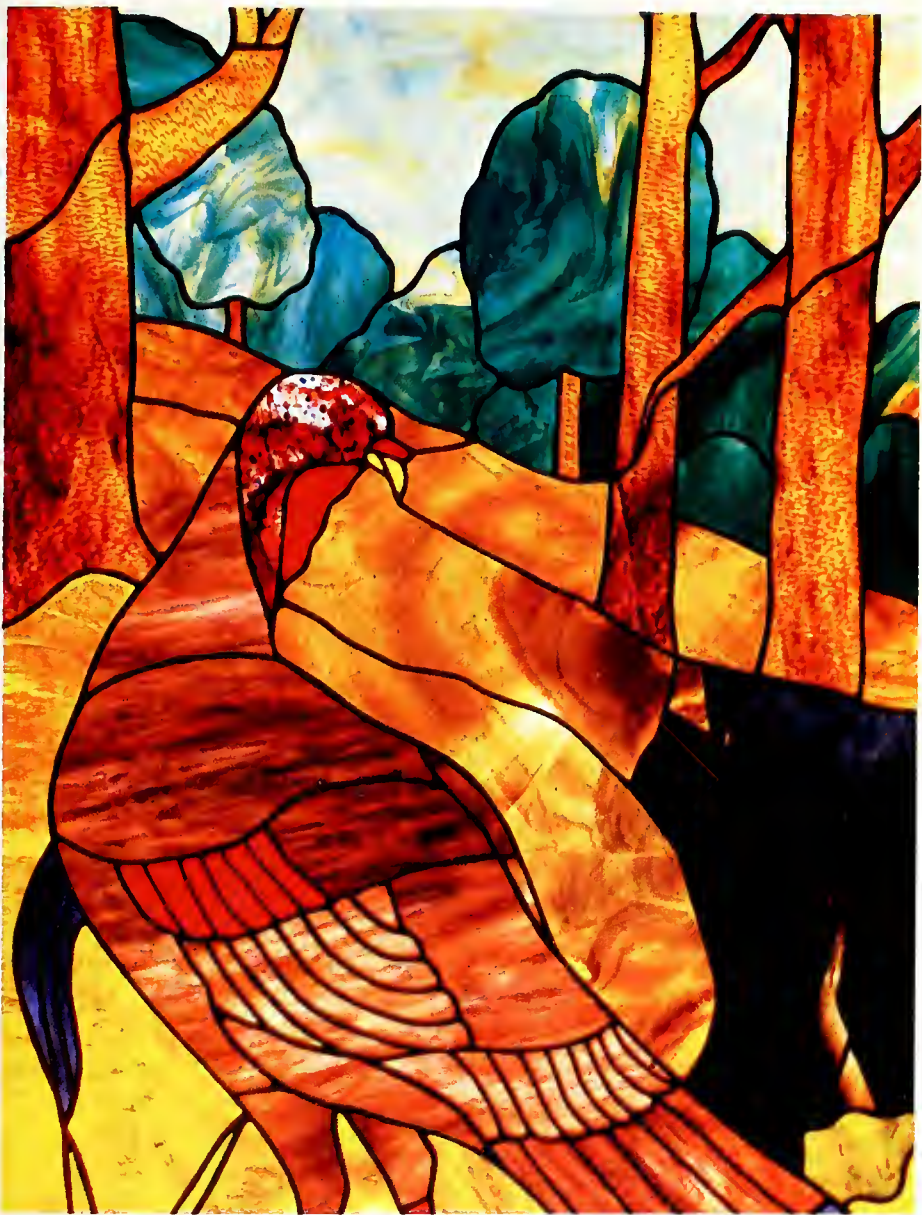
Dot Eversull's workshop is a small studio behind her home at Rapides Station about ten miles north of Alexandria. The studio has been enlarged several times to accommodate growth in the past five years since she took up her hobby. Her interest in stained glass originated as a diversion to occupy herself while she recuperated from foot surgery that temporarily slowed her normally active lifestyle. She taught herself through reading mounds of books checked out of the local library and through experimentation.

At first, she worked strictly as a hobby but after numerous gifts to family and friends, demand for her work grew. It wasn't long before word of mouth sales began keeping her busy full time. Today, after five years, most of her business is still word of mouth although a small sign off Hwy. 1 in front of her house now marks the studio for visitors in search of it.

To describe the creation of wildlife stained glass, the process sounds relatively simple. Yet after watching the process, it is obvious that there are several essential ingredients necessary for its making: a natural feeling and inclination for design, a knowledge and love of wildlife that appears in the design, a meticulous and skilled hand at craftsmanship, and patience for detail.

First, Mrs. Eversull draws a pattern to use as a guide for transferring her original design onto the glass. These designs are of her own creation, or custom drawn to a customer's specifications, or occasionally copies of paintings or drawings. She usually uses two patterns, one on a light table to cut the glass, one on a large table to lay out the cut glass like so many pieces in a puzzle. Cutting and piecing are her favorite steps because it is here where design and artistic skill are involved. The other steps are executions of craftsmanship to solder the pieces together and polish the final product.

Each piece is carefully cut, one at a time, with a razor sharp instrument, then sanded with a diamond grinder to polish rough edges and take off any slivers that might prevent perfect fit. Protective eye shields are worn during



Bob Dennie

**Such details as the red and white glass fused with crushed blue glass gives a realistic appearance to the turkey's head in this window.**

of the raw glass before cutting determine cost of the final product. Although stained glass art by nature is not inexpensive, the price tags do not reflect the time and care and craftsmanship that go into the making of each individual piece.

"Many customers at first don't know what stained glass is," Mrs. Eversull proclaims. "They think you paint the image onto the glass." But the real beauty of stained glass is actually that each part of the pattern is an individual piece, chosen for color and texture, and soldered into the overall design in a slow and tedious process. Each Eversull wildlife stained glass is individualized to customer specification with appropriate design and color. Often, windows are designed for certain spaces and the artist always visits the actual room before starting work to get a feel for treatment.

Although Monday through Friday is reserved each week for her stained glass, Dot Eversull spends her weekends in the outdoors, hunting, camping, or participating in shooting sports. Her entire family takes part, husband, son, two daughters, in-laws, and grandchildren. Dot Eversull is no amateur shooter. She was lady's champion trap shooter in Louisiana for three years, won the Mississippi state shoot one year, and was runner-up in Louisiana another year.

During her competitive shooting career, she tied six times with daughter-in-law, Doodie Eversull, wife of son Kenneth, a gun craftsman. Trap and Field magazine published an article on one of these events which they labeled "the first shoot-out between mother and daughter-in-law." Dot won three of the matches, Doodie won three.

Though Dot Eversull no longer finds time for competitive shooting, she sharpens her skills in the marsh and field almost every weekend during the hunting season. And it is here where she soaks up her inspiration and ideas for a different kind of wildlife: captured in glass.

this step. Lead will not stick to glass, so next step is taping a copper foil, that comes in rolls of different widths for different thicknesses of glass, onto each glass piece. Once all the pieces are cut, polished, and foiled, they are assembled into place and tacked with horseshoe nails that are flat and fit easily between the pieces.

A soldering iron to melt lead is used only after the entire window or art piece is in place and after an acid is painted on the foil to clean it and make the lead flow better. A mask is

worn during this step to prevent inhalation of toxic lead fumes. A patina acid is painted on the dried lead to turn it grey in color "because most customers don't like the final product to look too new," Mrs. Eversull explains. A fine powder polish and gentle cleaning and perhaps a wooden frame complete the window.

Depending on size and intricacy of design, the entire process may take weeks or months. Though basic price is \$50 per square foot, size, intricacy, and time involved as well as quality

*Hammond*  
*7 miles*

**JOYCE  
FOUNDATION**

**13,659.92 ACRES**

**LEASED  
50.46 AC.**

**DONATION  
12,809.46 AC.**

*New Orleans*  
*48 miles*

**NEW WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA DONATED  
TO DEPARTMENT BY THE JOYCE FOUNDATION**

**MANCHAC W.M.A.**

**By McFadden Duffy**

**D**onation of a 12,809-acre tract of wildlife habitat in Tangipahoa Parish to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries by the Joyce Foundation of Chicago highlighted a press conference at the Capitol October 12 called by Gov. David C. Treen.

At the time of the donation, the Joyce Foundation also leased an additional 850 acres of land to the department that provided ready access to the area from Interstate Hwy. 55, and brought the new wildlife management area to 13,659 acres.

The tract is located in the southern portion of Tangipahoa Parish, two miles south of Ponchatoula. It is near the existing Manchac Wildlife Management Area, and is easily accessible to people from New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Slidell, Covington, Hammond, and all parts of southeast Louisiana.

The wetland area is within the Pontchartrain basin and contains cypress-tupelo timber along with understory growth ideally suited for wildlife.

Game species found on the area include deer, swamp rabbit and waterfowl. The primary importance of the tract for outdoor recreation will be waterfowling. Other wildlife species found in the area are raccoon, nutria, muskrat, otter, mink, and opossum.

Fisheries resources are limited, but the sloughs, small lakes, and bayous provide aquatic habitat

for fish and reptiles. There is a substantial alligator population on the area.

By action of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission at its October 26 meeting in New Orleans, the new area was opened officially for public use.

For the remainder of this hunting season and until a permanent plan is developed to enhance and regulate the use of the new management area, seasons for the area will be the same as outside seasons for both hunting and trapping.

Additionally, the area will operate under the same general management rules as other wildlife management areas. No permanent blinds or tree stands shall be constructed on the area. Deer hunting will be restricted to still hunting only, and airboats, aircraft or hovercrafts are prohibited.

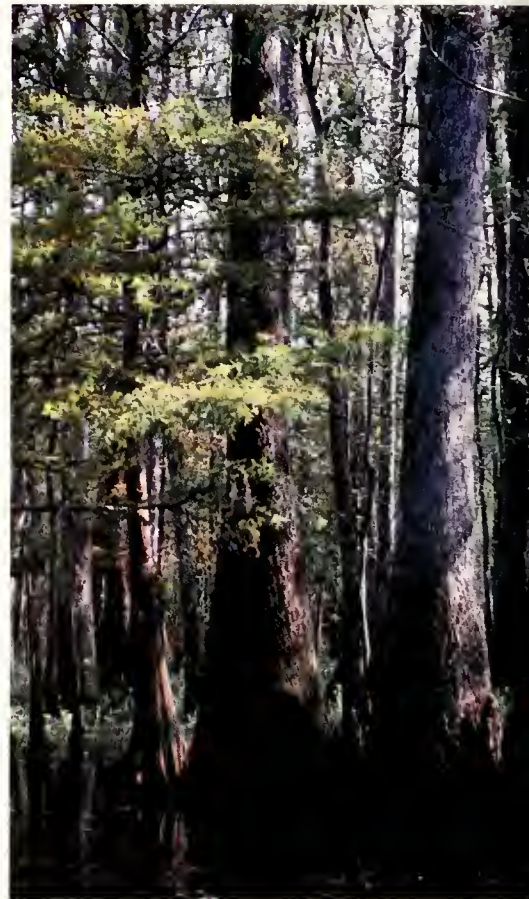
Maps of the new area are available at district offices of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and from the New Orleans office at 400 Royal Street.

Hunters who are not familiar with the area are urged to reconnoiter during daylight hours and then plan hunting trips after they have become familiar with the new area.

Jesse J. Guidry, Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, said that the department was grateful for the donation by the Joyce Foundation, and equally grateful for the role played by the Nature Conservancy in working out the necessary arrangements for the donation.

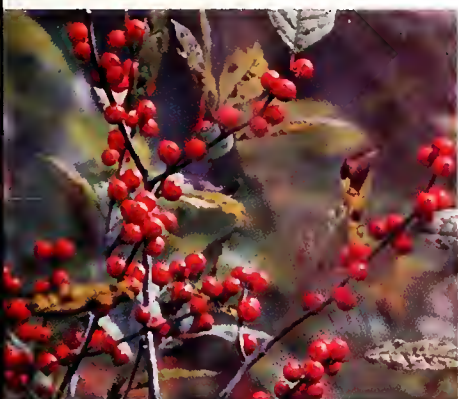


Shown from left in Gov. David C. Treen's office following announcement of donation of the Joyce Wildlife Management Area to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries are Charles U. Daly, president of the Joyce Foundation; Gov. Treen; Jesse J. Guidry, Secretary; Jesse Knowles, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission; John D. Newsom, Assistant Secretary; and David Morine, Nature Conservancy.

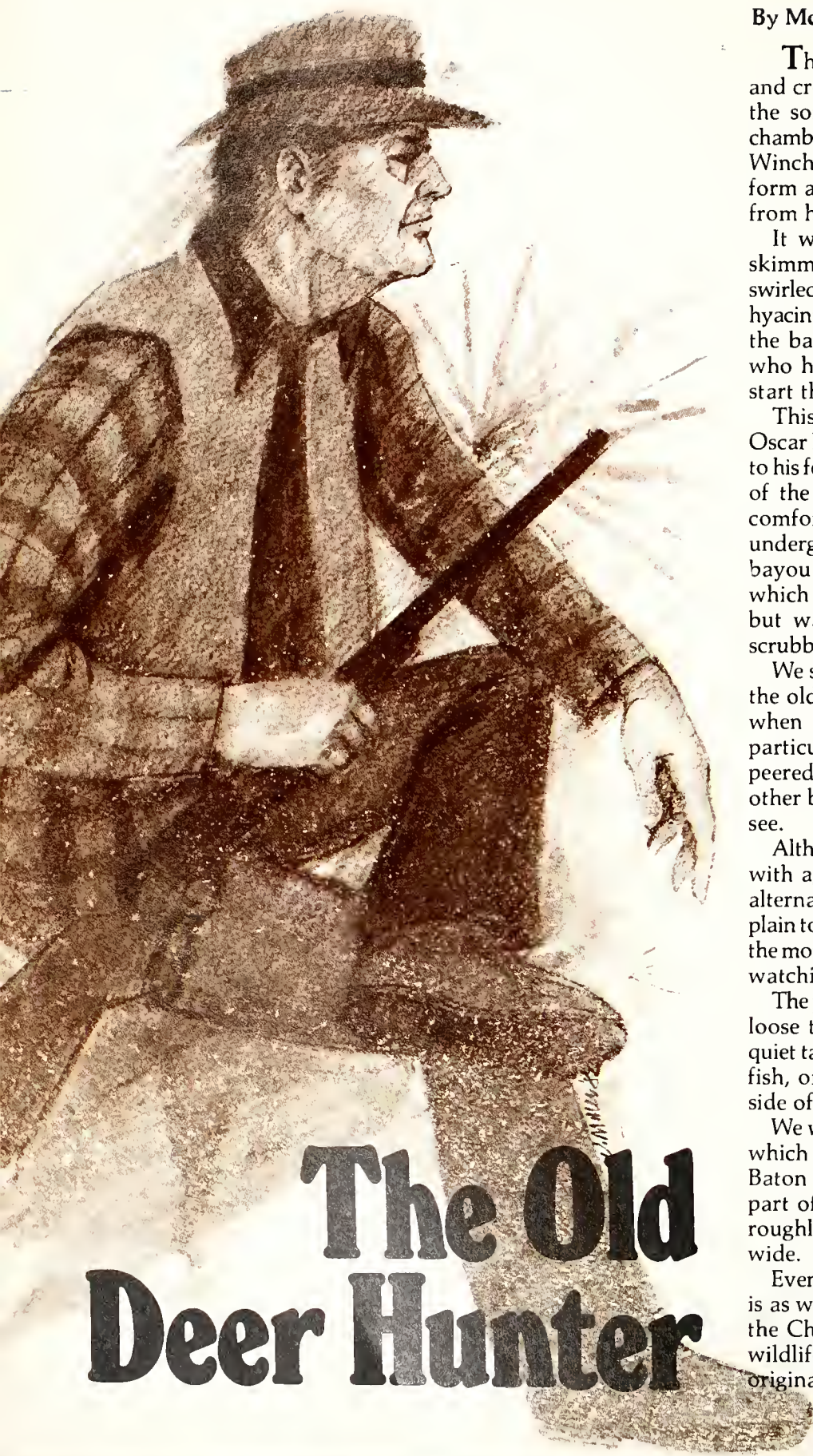


*The new Joyce Wildlife Management Area consists of 13,659 acres of predominantly wetlands in the Pontchartrain basin.*





*Cypress-tupelo timber and lush understory growth serve as ideal habitat for such wildlife as alligators, deer, swamp rabbit, and waterfowl.*



By McFadden Duffy

The old man settled down on the fallen log and crossed one leg over the other. There was the soft metallic sound of a cartridge being chambered as he worked the lever of his battered Winchester .44/40. I folded my raincoat to form a cushion and sat down a couple of feet from him resting my back against the log.

It was still early morning. Patches of fog skimmed low over the bayou in front of us and swirled lazily across frost-burned, floating water hyacinths. We glanced occasionally up and down the bayou waiting for the piqueurs, the men who handle the hounds, to release them and start the hunt.

This was years ago and my companion was Oscar Long of Lottie, La., known affectionately to his fellow hunters as Mister Oscar. The captain of the drive had given him one of the most comfortable stands because he had recently undergone a major operation. Our spot on the bayou bank was easily reached by a dirt road which ran a few yards from the bayou bank but was screened from sight by a stand of scrubby willow trees and matted undergrowth.

We spoke softly as we waited. Occasionally the old man would glance at me for emphasis when he considered something he said was particularly important, but most of the time he peered up and down the bayou, watching the other bank as far in each direction as he could see.

Although his face was weathered and wrinkled with age, his eyes were bright and alert as he alternately looked to the right or left. It became plain to me that Mister Oscar had started hunting the moment he chambered that round and started watching.

The piqueurs often wait an hour before turning loose the hounds so the only sound was our quiet talk and the occasional splash of a foraging fish, or the distant call of a bird on the other side of the bayou.

We were hunting the vast Atchafalaya basin which runs southwest from a point west of Baton Rouge, La., and splits the lower central part of the state in half. The basin swamp is roughly 100 miles long and about 30 miles wide.

Even today, much of the Atchafalaya basin is as wild and desolate as it was in the days of the Chitimacha Indians who once utilized its wildlife resources. Its remote wooded areas, originally dominated by cypress and tupelo

# The Old Deer Hunter

gum, and its low, swampy swales laced together by an elaborate network of small rivers, sloughs and bayous continue to produce an amazing variety of wildlife, including whitetail deer.

Virtually inaccessible except by boat, the Atchafalaya swamp is a maze of wooded wetlands that has always evoked my respect and admiration for the men who come to know its almost sinister, solitary depths and hunt there.

The reason for my being there that morning, sitting near Mister Oscar but really not being in on the hunt, was two-fold. For several years I'd heard about this deer camp and the old man who had been captain of the hunt for so many years. And, I wanted to learn firsthand what dog-hunting for deer was all about. I wanted to do a story about that man and a form of hunting that may be just a memory in the deep South in another generation or so.

Drives are always conducted in much the same way, he told me softly as we sat there. Hunters are spotted at intervals on stands. The line of hunters can be straight, curved in keeping with a natural contour, or in a form of a rambling "L". The piqueurs release the hounds in two or more packs on trails leading toward the line of hunters, and hopefully the dogs drive the deer to the hunters.

It might sound like an effective, simple, and perhaps not-too-sporting way of bagging deer. But there is much more to hunting with hounds than that, and one has to sample and savor it before reaching any rash conclusions.

More bucks than ever are shot, he told me, circle and cross their own trails, double back, or swim bayous, and this confuses the hounds. And many a hunter, after a cold morning huddled on a stump or against the base of a tree, will crouch in readiness as the frenzied hounds draw near, only to curse quietly as a sleek doe crashes through the imaginary line to sanctuary beyond. On either-sex days that's a different matter, but those days are limited.

In many deer drives the does are the deer that tackle the line while the wily bucks play tricks on the dogs. The reward of the chase often is only warm companionship and the music of blooded hounds.

Mister Oscar asked me to move closer so that we could keep our voices low. Even as we talked, he glanced up and down the bayou and had one ear cocked for the hounds.

That first hour slipped by quickly, and it wasn't long before we could hear the hounds deep in the woods on the other side of the bayou. Occasionally Mister Oscar softly explained what was going on in the swamp. He knew nearly all of the hounds by name and voice and could tell which were actually trailing and which were confused and merely following.

Soon the hounds encountered a fresh trail, and their baying swelled into a lusty crescendo. I knew a real chase was on. Mister Oscar placed his other hand on the rifle that was balanced casually across his knees.

"He's heading into the line now," he said, "but he's got a long way to go before he gets there, and a lot of times a buck will head this way instead, to swim the deep bayou."

I asked him about swamp bucks and their habits.

"They're just like other deer," he said, "regular as a clock. They follow the same trails, feed twice a day, and in this moss-shadowed swamp they're good at hiding away when they want to.

"Scent given off by the deer," he went on to say, "is left on the leafy bushes they touch when they're running. Some hounds have no trouble keeping on a trail, but the young dogs have to learn how. And, often, for every buck the dogs succeed in running into the line of hunters there's one that gets away."

The baying of the hounds grew fainter. I could hardly distinguish it above the murmur of the breeze in the willows behind us, but the old man had his head tilted slightly to one side and there was a faint smile on his face.

"They're turning toward Bear Bayou now," he said. "We may get a shot later."

He explained that sometimes when the dogs turn a buck toward that particular bayou the deer will double back and try to slip across the bayou. Several had tried it on previous hunts and were killed from our stand or the other two bayou stands that were several hundred yards to our right and left. With rifles on the bayou stands, three men could cover the relatively short portion of the rambling "L".

Mister Oscar had certainly called the shot. The buck the dogs were running turned east at Bear Bayou and was heading our way. The baying of the hounds, faint at first, grew stronger. Suddenly, off to the left we heard two shots, not more than a second apart.

"That's Doc," he said, explaining that Doc was the only man on the old logging road who was carrying a rifle. The others on the road were using shotguns with buckshot as is customary with most dog hunting.

Off in the swamp, over the bugling of the hounds, we heard Doc's horn. We counted. The third note brought a smile to the old man's face. It meant that Doc had killed a buck.

Now we could hear the second pack of hounds in the distance. They had been released deep in the swamp, near the end of the logging road, and were driving toward the center of the "L".

The hounds that had turned east at Bear Bayou and were heading our way drowned out the distant pack. My pulse tingled at the frantic baying and yelping. The deep bugling of the lead dog rose above the rest.

"That's Blue in front," said the old man. "I told them he was a good trailing hound." He paused. "Sounds like Mutt and Jeff are with him."

Then, as I reached out for my camera which I had placed on top of the carrying case, the hounds seemed to change course again.

"That buck is going to give Blue the slip," the old man said softly. "he's circling and will cross his own tracks." He was smiling and there was a glint of respect in his eyes for the deer. I realized then that for him listening to the dogs and knowing what they were doing was the real thrill in this sort of deer hunting.

The hounds swerved to the right and passed in front of us, heading deep into the swamp again. The old man explained what had happened. The buck had led the hounds in a tight circle, crossing and recrossing its own trail. Somewhere along the line, it swung out and swam a bayou, losing them for sure for the day.

I glanced at Mister Oscar. He chuckled. "Those hounds will have sore feet tonight," he said.

Then we heard the throaty boom of a shotgun, followed by a second shot. There was silence for a few minutes, then a horn sounded three times. We knew a second buck was down. Then we heard three long blasts on a horn, followed by three more, and another three.

The captain had ended the hunt, and now the hunters would gather to help pack out the deer. The old man cleared his rifle and closed the action on an empty chamber, then slipped the ejected cartridge back into the magazine. We picked up and walked the short distance to the jeep. The old man was kinda hunched over

in the seat beside me, stiff from those few hours sitting on the log.

At the camp, which was really a houseboat that had been floated down the bayou and permanently moored at a spot where pens and shelters for the hounds were built, the old man and I warmed the coffee that remained in the big enamel drip pot. When it was hot we sat on the steps sipping the dark roast brew and waited for the others.

The two men who had been stationed on the bayou soon arrived in another jeep and joined us on the steps with cups of coffee. It wasn't long before the others began arriving in boats. They'd packed the bucks to where the old logging road met the bayou and hauled them by boat from there. Doc's buck was big and had a good rack. One of the other hunters had dropped a young four-pointer.

The piqueurs arrived last in two boats, bringing with them the hounds that had responded to the whooping and whistling. The others would have to find their way home.

I was interested in the manner in which the old man hurried to meet the piqueurs and the way he fondled, examined and patted the dogs as they were placed in the pens. He even entered the big pen and I watched him gently rub the feet of several hounds. He was making certain that they would be able to run the following day.

While some of the men began fixing lunch, I stayed with the old man down at the dog pen and waited for the hounds that were still loose, but probably finding their way home. During the next hour or so they arrived, one by one. Some walked gingerly. All were soaking wet from swimming the bayou. There was one thing I learned about hounds that day. Some of them don't come home until *they* stop hunting.

The old man seemed pleased when all the hounds were accounted for and we joined the rest of the party as they stood around visiting those skinning out the two deer. Only the men busy with the cooking didn't participate in the conversation that went with the skinning operation.

That mid-afternoon meal was something to remember. Like the pre-dawn breakfast of hot grits, bacon and sausage, masses of fried eggs greasy with bacon and sausage drippings, and platters of hot biscuits with big jars of syrup, it was a king-size meal.

There was a big beef roast that had been partly cooked elsewhere and had its final two

hours in the big black oven. Bowls of vegetables covered the big table, and there were jars of preserved celeste figs and homemade jellies to go with big platters of biscuits. Everything was washed down by freshly brewed coffee, the aroma of which was blended with a dozen food odors and the permanent wood smoke smell of the camp.

It turned somewhat colder during the afternoon following a wind shift to the north. Most of us sat around the big woodburning stove that night and I guess I heard a hundred tales of deer and dogs.

Before dark, I'd gone with the old man to feed the hounds. He fetched them one at a time from the big holding pen and gave them a relatively small helping of sacked dog food.

"We never feed the hounds too much when we're going to run them a second day," he told me with a smile on his leathery face. "They run better when they're hungry. They'll get a bellyfull if they do right tomorrow."

It seemed that we had hardly settled down for the night in the rows of three-tiered bunks when it was time to get up. There was another huge breakfast, one that would keep us warm inside until the sun came up.

We started off again after breakfast, with most of the hunters loading into boats. All of the hounds were on leashes and divided into two packs, one to a boat with a piqueur. I was going to sit with Mister Oscar again so we took his jeep and I drove to the same spot.

Mister Oscar chambered a round and settled down on the log, leaning his rifle against it within easy reach. I sat close to him and we were silent while we waited for the drive to start. The air was crisp and I was glad that I'd worn heavier clothing. Soon we heard the hounds.

"They've put the dogs on the inside trails this morning," the old man said. "If we're going to get any action today, it will come fast."

The men handling the dogs had selected different trails this morning and generally used different trails on successive mornings of the hunt. Since they'd released them rather close to the big bayou it meant that early in the drive the hounds might frighten a buck into trying to swim away. That being the case, perhaps one of the three hunters posted on the bank might get a shot.

It wasn't long before the dogs picked up a fresh scent and their sporadic yelping changed to the high-pealed baying of hounds on a hot

trail. As we listened, Mister Oscar kept an eye on the bayou, looking up and down the far bank every few seconds. I scratched the loamy bank with a stick, making meaningless designs, engrossed in the baying of the hounds.

Suddenly, the old man whispered, "Don't move, son." I froze against the log, searching the shore in front of me for sign of movement. Then I saw a buck—not the one the hounds were after, but another.

It was standing on the opposite bank, looking first upstream and then downstream. Sunlight made its brownish hide almost golden. Its big rack was tossed back, and I could almost see the velvet nose sniffing. The buck turned slightly as I heard the old man's hammer click. The buck stood still for a moment, then started scrambling down the steep bank toward the water.

I glanced quickly at my companion. He had slid quietly from the log and was resting his weight on one knee. His weathered cheek lay along the stock of the rifle. Then he fired.

The buck jerked to one side and started up the bank. A second shot dropped it. It slid down to the edge of the water, seemingly resting on folded legs. Its head was pointed down, snout buried in the soft mud, the 12-point rack tilted forward.

Mister Oscar settled back on the log and placed his rifle against a jutting root. He seemed calm but his eyes darted excitedly up and down the bank, always returning to the downed deer.

"Son, that old buck was trying to slip across the bayou," he said. "They'll fool you a lot of times that way. Swamp deer know how to hide. Bet that buck let the hounds run within a hundred yards of him, then when the other buck and the dogs passed he tried to slip away."

He fumbled in the baggy pocket of the coat he was wearing and pulled out a hunter's horn. His cheeks puffed out at each of the three blasts and his face was red and he was panting a little.

"When the boys get in after the hunt's over we'll get them to fetch a boat down here and pack him up the bayou to the camp," he said.

I nodded and settled down against the log again. The hounds were still running the other deer and before long they'd drive it into the line or out into the bayou.

I studied the old man's face. He looked a little weary but his eyes were bright and he was glancing up and down the bayou watchfully, his head back and one ear cocked for the baying of the hounds.



**Success with Stripers...**

## A New Fishery For Louisiana

**Striped bass and hybrid striped bass have been in Louisiana waterbodies for almost two decades now as a result of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' stocking program . . . but still they do not get the recognition they deserve as challenging game fish, excellent table-fare and important controllers of overcrowded forage fish in popular fishing lakes around the state.**

It was in the late 1960s when Louisiana freshwater anglers first noticed the hard-hitting, fast-running, line-breaking strangers beneath the surface of Toledo Bend Reservoir, D'Arbonne Lake and other fishing holes around the state. Now, after almost two decades of being stocked in Louisiana lakes, the striped bass and hybrid striped bass are still considered strangers by most Louisianians. The Department of Wildlife and Fisheries would like to change that . . . 'cause these are fish worth getting to know.

Long known as a popular game fish along the eastern seaboard of the United States, the striped bass is classified as an anadromous fish, meaning it lives most of its life in saltwater but migrates into freshwater to spawn. The striped bass was a native to southeastern coastal Louisiana in the Rigolets and Lake Ponchartrain, and in the Tangipahoa, Tchefuncte, Amite, Tickfaw and Pearl Rivers during spawning times. But, for some unknown reason, these Louisiana coastal stripers disappeared sometime in the 1950s. So how did this fish and its hybrid cousin end up in freshwater lakes and reservoirs throughout Louisiana today?

It all began when the Santee and Cooper Rivers in South Carolina were impounded in 1941 to create the Santee-Cooper Reservoir. An Atlantic striped bass population became landlocked in the reservoir and much to South Carolina biologists' surprise, the fish survived and reproduced successfully without

having to return to the sea. And to the biologists' delight, the landlocked stripers fed almost exclusively on shad, forage fish that typically become overcrowded in southern reservoirs. South Carolina decided to stock all its state reservoirs with striped bass as a biological control on forage fish. They constructed a striped bass hatchery and developed procedures for procuring striped bass eggs and rearing striped bass fry.

Before South Carolina's experience with the landlocked stripers, Louisiana fisheries biologists had been looking for a predatory fish to stock in Louisiana reservoirs to control overcrowded gizzard shad populations. The problem of overabundant shad is particularly severe in our state because of the long growing season, fertile waters, and a lack of native predatory fish which feed almost exclusively on shad. The striped bass was not at first considered for stocking because it was thought to be anadromous. But after witnessing South Carolina's success with stripers, Louisiana biologists realized this was just the fish Louisiana needed.

In 1965, after evaluating South Carolina's experience and after careful study of all available literature on foods eaten and habitat occupied by striped bass, our department decided to begin a program of stocking striped bass in lakes around the state.

The reason for stocking striped bass in Louisiana was actually three-fold. First, there was a need for predatory fish as a biological control on gizzard shad. It needed to be a fish that occupies a habitat primarily different from and which does not directly compete with the native largemouth bass, or black bass as they are commonly called. Second, biologists hoped to re-establish the striped bass in those southeastern Louisiana streams where it was once a native anadromous species, and then possibly move it into

western coastal rivers as well. Third, the striped bass would provide sport fishermen with a highly prized game fish, one that hits hard, fights hard and tastes great.

Toledo Bend, along the Texas-Louisiana border, and D'Arbonne Lake in north-central Louisiana, were the first two reservoirs selected to be stocked with striped bass. D'Arbonne, a relatively new reservoir at the time, was already overcrowded with shad, and Toledo Bend was expected to have the same problem after its impoundment was completed in 1966.

From 1965 to 1974, Louisiana obtained striped bass fry for the stocking program from South Carolina. During these years Louisiana fisheries biologists worked to perfect the techniques for producing fry within the state and in 1970 the first brood stripers taken from Louisiana waters were successfully spawned. By 1974 we were able to produce sufficient numbers of fry to meet our needs. Since then, ten to twenty million striped bass fry have been produced annually at the department's laboratory at Toledo Bend from brood-stock within the state.

Some of these fry have now become thirty-pound fish—the record striper caught in Louisiana so far is a 33-3 pounder from Toledo Bend Reservoir. In some other states, striped bass have attained weights of 50 to 60 pounds; in saltwater they can be 70 to 100 pounds.

In conjunction with the striped bass stocking efforts, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries also began a program of producing and stocking hybrid striped bass. These hybrids are the offspring of white bass males and striped bass females. The hybrid stripers have certain advantages over the pure stripers: they are easier and cheaper to rear, there is a higher percentage of fertilization of eggs, and high survival during handling and transport. The hybrids retain many of the striped bass characteristics: they prefer open water areas and therefore do not occupy largemouth bass habitat and they are constantly on the move—which makes them, like the stripers, a challenge to fish for. Hybrid stripers grow to twenty pounds, not as large as stripers, but



*Churning waters at Toledo Bend dam attract stripers—which attract fishermen in pursuit of this challenging gamefish.*



still large enough to be effective predators on large shad and to be highly prized game fish.

Today both striped and hybrid striped bass fry are produced annually by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and to date there are four Louisiana lakes stocked with striped bass, twenty-four stocked with hybrid striped bass, and four stocked with both striped and hybrid striped bass. Department fisheries biologists have been extremely pleased with the results of the striped bass stocking program. The fish have met their expectations and then some.

To understand the many benefits of the striped bass stocking program it helps to understand a little about the ecology of a freshwater lake. Importantly, a lake can only support a certain amount of biomass (living weight) and no more. If there is an overabundance of shad or other forage fish, these fish use the lake's nutrients and thus limit the size and number of game fish there can be in the lake. These excess forage fish are an unused resource of the lake... they cannot be utilized by the existing sport fish or by sport fishermen.

In most lakes, native predatory fish alone cannot keep the shad population from becoming overcrowded. They cannot eat the large shad and they do not occupy the open water areas, leaving shad in these areas without predators.

By introducing striped bass into a lake, an important large predator is added—the primary predator in the open water areas. By stocking stripers, large amounts of forage fish biomass is converted into greater numbers and pounds of sportfish for fishermen to enjoy. When stripers consume shad, more food and space is made available for smaller game fish which in turn are eaten by black bass, crappie, catfish, white bass and other sport fish.

In most places where stocked, striped bass and hybrid striped bass have effectively controlled undesirable shad populations. They have provided a balance of forage and game fish... enough forage fish to feed the game fish, but not so many as to tie up nutrients in an unused resource. And the striped bass are fine sportfish themselves.

Not everyone, however, has been pleased with the striped bass program. As soon as striped bass became plentiful enough to show up in fishermen's creels,

black bass anglers began to complain that the stripers were eating large-mouth bass and hurting their fishery. Some individuals and some organized black bass clubs have urged the state to stop putting striped bass in Louisiana lakes. They blame the stripers and hybrid stripers for lowered black bass fishing success, particularly in the large, popular Toledo Bend Reservoir.

From the beginning, department fisheries biologists have been confident that striped bass would not harm black bass populations, either by eating them or by eating all their food. They had evaluated striped bass studies from other states and all available literature indicated stripers feed almost exclusively on shad and other forage fish, and they occupy the open, deeper waters of a lake, not the weedy, shallow areas that black bass prefer.

To substantiate these findings for Louisiana, biologists began in 1974 to evaluate the striped bass stocking program in Toledo Bend and D'Arbonne Lake. Part of this was a study of the food habits of the stripers in these two impoundments. The stomachs of 61 striped bass collected from D'Arbonne Lake from July 1974 to June 1979 collectively contained 90% shad, 6.7% bluegill and other sunfish, 1.1% brook silversides, 1.1% largemouth bass, and 1.1% crawfish. The largemouth bass was a single six-inch fish in one of the stomachs. Stomachs from 187 Toledo Bend stripers collected during this same time period contained 61.3% bluegill and other sunfish, 33.3% shad, 4.7% brook silversides and 0.4% logperch. Of the sunfish eaten by these Toledo Bend striped bass, 85% were five inches or less in total length... indicating stripers are efficient in controlling small, overly abundant sunfish as well as shad.

More recent food habit studies of striped bass have been conducted at Toledo Bend which show similar results and also reveal some seasonal differences. Striped bass from Toledo Bend collected in July and August of 1981 contained 89.7% shad, 1.3% bream and 0.9% unidentifiable fish remains. Samples collected in January through March 1982 contained 84.4% shad, 1.1% bream, 0.5% crappie, 9.5% largemouth bass and 13.5% unidentifiable fish remains. Stomachs from fish collected in April through June 1982 showed these stripers ate 5.2% shad, 57.5% bream, and 37.5% unidentifi-

ble fish remains. This study showed that stripers in Toledo Bend fed primarily on shad in the summer and winter months, and fed more readily on bream in spring.

In addition to this Toledo Bend study, stomachs from 273 striped bass were collected from other lakes around the state from December 1981 to February 1982. Shad was the predominant food eaten by these stripers, making up collectively 86.9% of the foods eaten. Other stomach contents included unidentifiable fish remains (8.2%), minnows (2.2%), bream (1.9%), yellow bass (0.8%) and trace amounts of insects.

During this same time period, 2,200 hybrid striped bass stomachs were collected from fourteen lakes in the state. Based on all stomachs, the hybrid stripers ate 87.7% shad. Their other stomach contents were bream (1.6%), minnows (1.0%), skipjack herring (0.7%), unidentifiable fish remains (8.2%), insects (0.7%) and grass shrimp (0.2%).

The food habit studies in Louisiana showed repeatedly that striped bass and hybrid striped bass eat predominately shad, and to a lesser extent bream. Thirty food habit studies in ten other states have similarly revealed that shad is the primary food of stripers and hybrid stripers. Striped and hybrid striped bass are simply not guilty of



At Toledo Bend dam, a boat is not necessary to catch stripers.

decimating largemouth bass or other game fish populations.

Fisheries biologists do not deny that black bass catches have declined in recent years at Toledo Bend reservoir, where most of the complaints have originated, but they attribute this to the natural cycle that takes place in a reservoir following impoundment. It is typical for reservoirs to afford excellent fishing just after impoundment, with a decline in harvest as the reservoir ages.

During the first few years following impoundment, the greatest amounts of nutrients are available in the water because of the great amount of terrestrial vegetation that is inundated. Also in these early years, the fish population in the lake is at its lowest level—there has not been time for sufficient reproduction to fill all available niches with fish. The forage fish have plenty to eat but the predatory fish food supply is at a very low level.

As a result, the predators must seek food almost constantly and move longer distances in search of food. Because of this feeding activity by the predators, especially largemouth bass, fishermen will often observe the fish striking at the lake surface. Fish are most easily caught when hungry and moving in search of a meal.

As time passes, reproduction occurs in the reservoir and since many of the forage fish, such as shad, are capable of spawning two to four times in a single growing season, they soon fill the greatest amount of space in the lakes. Consequently, the predatory fish do not have to move as far or as often to find food. While there may be more black bass and other game fish in the reservoir than there were in the first few years after impoundment, they are harder to catch because they are not searching for food as actively.



**Ten to twenty million striped bass fry produced annually at the department's Toledo Bend laboratory are grown to fingerling size in hatchery ponds and then released in a number of Louisiana lakes.**

Biologists say it was only normal for Toledo Bend fishing success to reach a peak and then decline somewhat before leveling off. They say that if it were not for the introduction of striped bass into the lake, the sport fishing success would have declined to a lower level. The striped bass predation on shad has allowed black bass and other game fish more food and space for growth and reproduction. The same has been true in the other lakes stocked where a striped bass or hybrid striped bass fishery was established.

So, the striped bass and hybrid striped bass deserve a lot of credit for their roles in Louisiana freshwater lake management. And they deserve credit for their value as a sportfish in their own right.

Above and beyond their importance as predators on shad, striped bass have opened up a whole new fishery for Louisiana. Anyone who has tried, has found stripers are exciting and challenging to fish for... and the rewards are great, for, unlike black bass, stripers can be twenty, even thirty, pounds. A fisherman who lands one of these is a mighty satisfied fisherman. Just about all who have set out after stripers, or who have caught one accidentally while pursuing other fish, are now hooked on the sport.

If you're not yet hooked, you need to plan a trip to Toledo Bend, Claiborne Lake, Lake Bistineau or another of the lakes stocked with stripers and try your hand at fishing for these fifteen to thirty pound whoppers. It helps, the first time or two, to go with an experienced striped bass fisherman. To catch stripers you need heavier tackle, different lures and different techniques than used for other freshwater fishing. You have to understand striper habits and movements, know how to find them and how to fish for them. To enjoy the meat, you have to know how to clean stripers. Then there are a number of ways to cook striped bass, all with delicious results.

Look for an article on striped bass fishing—equipment, lures, techniques, cleaning, cooking—in an upcoming issue of *Louisiana Conservationist*. We'll show you how much success you can have with stripers.

### Where the Stripers Are

Louisiana lakes stocked, as of 1982, with:

**Striped bass**—Bistineau, Bruin, Indian Creek, Toledo Bend

**Hybrid striped bass**—

Bartholomew, Bayou Macon Cutoff 1, Bayou Macon Cutoff 2, Bayou Macon Cutoff 3, Bayou St. John, Bear, Bundick, Bussey, Caddo, Chichot, Cocodrie, Concordia, Cross, Davis, De Siard, False River, Horseshoe, Kincaide, La Fourche, Providence, Sibley, St. John, Tew, Wallace

**Both species**—Cane, Chaplin, Claiborne, D'Arbonne

## Expanded Hunter Safety

The department's hunter safety section has been transferred from the Information and Education Division to the Enforcement Division with the intent of expanding hunter safety training services to the public. The transfer, effective last November, was made by department Secretary Jesse J. Guidry after a review of hunter safety programs in many other states. By placing hunter safety under enforcement, trained wildlife agents will be available for instruction thus increasing the number of department hunter safety educators.

Presently, the department certifies an average of 8,000 students per year. Plans for the near future are to certify 20,000 hunters per year. If the legislature passes a mandatory hunter safety law, number of people certified annually will increase even more and department personnel will be in a position to handle the increased volume of certifications.

Hunter safety courses offered to the public will basically remain the same as they have been in the past. Arrangements to schedule courses should be made through the department's Baton Rouge office at P.O. Box 15570, Baton Rouge, LA 70895. Requests should be mailed or called in a minimum of three weeks in advance.

## Acorns for Wildlife

At least two organizations in Louisiana recently completed projects that will help save a place for wildlife in our state.

This past fall, the St. Bernard Parish 4-H Wildlife Club collected over twenty-five gallons of live and water oak acorns and the East Ascension Sportsman's League collected in excess of 300 pounds of varied acorn species. Both collections were donated to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to be utilized in the Acres for Wildlife Program which offers assistance to landowners interested in improving their lands for wildlife.

The oaks for wildlife program works like this: each fall, department game division personnel around the state, with the assistance of individuals and organizations, collect acorns that provide the nursery stock that yields seedlings used in hardwood plantings. The department delivers the acorns to the Louisiana Forestry Commission which plants them and raises them to year old seedlings.

## Make a Check for Wildlife

✓ Once again, that not-always-so-pleasant income tax filing time is upon us. This year, for the second year in Louisiana, anyone interested in helping the state's wildlife can do so by donating part of their 1982 state income tax refund to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission. For those of you expecting a refund, one checkmark and designation of a dollar amount as small or as great as you wish will earmark a portion of your return to the enhancement of wildlife, both game and nongame.

Last year, this wildlife checkoff was first implemented as a result of Act 784 of the 1981 Legislature which designated that such funds be utilized for "the preservation, protection, perpetuation, and enhancement of game or nongame wildlife and its habitat in this state." The 1981 returns resulted in the collection of \$360,000 that will be utilized for acquisition of wildlife habitat, one of the highest of today's management priorities. The alternative to acquisition is destruction of habitat and degraded water quality which accompanies conversion of forested wetlands to agriculture and other development.

A checkmark for wildlife on your 1982 Louisiana income tax return will be used to set aside such areas for wild birds and animals and for public recreation.

## The Business of Wildlife

Hunting, fishing and wildlife-associated recreation is big business. In 1980, almost 100 million Americans took to the woods, fields and streams in pursuit of a wide variety of wildlife-based activities. And in the process, they spent 40-billion dollars; now, that's big business.

It all stems from people enjoying themselves through experiencing wildlife in one way or another. There is no question about it, you can't beat being in the great outdoors, but it's going to cost you money these days.

There's gas to buy for transportation to the hunting camp, clothing, equip-

ment, and hunting gear, meals and hotel rooms away from home, guide services, and little things, like insect repellent or a new pair of camouflage gloves to replace the pair lost last hunting season. This money spent is pumped into local economies throughout each state and it goes for a wide range of services and equipment.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service figures in 1980 indicate that Americans spent 330 million days hunting and a total of \$5.5 billion. Fishermen spent over \$10 billion for equipment, transportation, food, lodging, and licenses and fees with a total of 858 million days afield. In addition to major expenditures to pursue fishing and hunting, sportsmen also spent \$9 billion for related items used in conjunction with their sport such as boats, trailers, and cabins.

And hunting and fishing are not the only type of wildlife-associated recreation Americans pay for to enjoy. Eighty-three million Americans (30 million sportsmen and 53 million people who neither fish nor hunt) reported taking trips to observe or photograph wildlife or engaging in such activities around their homes. These activities resulted in the expenditure of \$14.8 billion on travel and equipment and supplies ranging from binoculars and cameras to birdseed.

While some wildlife recreation expenses are obvious, there are others that are not so apparent. How many millions of dollars are spent annually to feed and care for the thousands of hunting dogs in this country? How many trips to the vet to keep these dogs healthy? Then there's insurance, for boats, recreational vehicles, hunting lodges, and guns. These figures all add up quickly to show that the true economic benefits of hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-based recreation have not been recognized. These activities give real meaning to a quality of life that many Americans take for granted.

The priceless intangibles of wildlife experiences bring enjoyment to our lives. Wildlife-related activities also bring tangible benefits to Louisianians in the form of monetary boosts to state and local economies. Wildlife in the United States and in Louisiana is truly big business.

Then, in late January or early February of each year, the young trees, approximately two to three feet tall, are distributed to the public on a first come, first served basis. Applications are taken each year in December for trees that will be given away the following January or February. Early orders have the best chance of being filled.

Long range goal of this acorn collection/oak distribution project, now in its ninth year, is to increase food availability for wildlife. Oak acorns are excellent food for a variety of game and nongame birds and animals: deer, wild turkey, squirrel, and quail, to name a few. Desirable oak species include live oak, water oak, willow oak, white oak, shumard oak, Nuttall oak, cow oak, and sawtooth oak.

Each year, since 1975 when the program was started, about 100,000 oak trees are planted on wildlife management areas and private lands. More trees produce more acorns that in turn feed more wildlife.

The twenty-five gallons of acorns collected by the St. Bernard Parish 4-H Wildlife Club was a project initiated as a contest among members to see who could collect the most acorns. Winner out of sixteen participants was Linda Dardar, Our Lady of Prompt Succor School, who came up with twelve gallons. The competition was the idea of Bob Duplechin, assistant county agent, St. Bernard Parish, in charge of 4-H.

The St. Bernard Parish 4-H Wildlife Club members are no strangers to doing their part in wildlife conservation. Past projects include planting trees in the marsh along the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet spoil banks. Last year about 300 oaks were planted; the trees improve the wildlife habitat by providing food and also help with erosion control. This year, the group will plant about 1,000 trees of about twenty varieties and watch them over a period of months to determine which grow better.

Nor is the East Ascension Sportsman's League membership unfamiliar with wildlife conservation projects; their annual fall acorn collection is one of many ongoing services they perpetuate year round. For at least four years, they have collected substantial numbers of acorns each fall; the collection is spearheaded by V.J. Bourque and his wife Marie who inspire participation through family and group participation. "Collecting acorns for wildlife can be fun, an activity for the entire family," says Marie.

Other individuals and organizations interested in participating in the oaks

for wildlife program should contact their local district wildlife and fisheries office for information. Anyone wishing to collect acorns should pack them in cardboard boxes or paper bags, not airtight plastic bags. Species should be packaged individually according to species and labeled. Live and white oak acorns should be refrigerated to retard sprouting. The acorns should be collected in fall and sent to any district wildlife and fisheries office located in Minden, Monroe, Alexandria, Ferriday, Lake Charles, Opelousas, Baton Rouge, and New Orleans.

Individuals wishing to receive free oak seedlings for planting on public or private lands, should apply in writing for trees distributed each January and February. Requests for oak seedlings can be addressed to "Oaks for Wildlife", P.O. Box 15570, Baton Rouge, LA 70895. Distribution of trees is through department district offices in eight locations around the state.

### **Seven Louisiana Students Win Prizes in National Hunting and Fishing Day Poster Contest**

David Morvant, Aaran Cochran, Annette Cooper, Peter Young and Johnny Friloux from Luling, Patricia Badeaux of Des Allemands, and Scott Anthony Moras of Alexandria are winners in the 1982 National Hunting and Fishing Day poster contest. Their posters illustrating the contest theme "Sportsmen and Conservation Working Together" had already been selected as winners in locally sponsored contests before being entered in the national NHF Day poster contest.

David, an 8th grader and Aaran, a 7th grader, both of Lakewood Jr. High School, won Honorable Mention Awards in the Junior Division and will each receive a \$75 U.S. Savings Bond. Annette, an 11th grader and Patricia, a 12th grader, both of Hahnville High School, have won Merit Awards and will each receive \$50 U.S. Savings Bonds. Peter, a 7th grader and Johnny, an 8th grader, both of Lakewood Jr. High School, have also won Merit Awards and will each receive \$50 U.S. Savings Bonds. Scott, a 12th grader at Holy Savior Menard High School, also won a Merit Award and will receive a \$50 bond. Their entries were sponsored by Abe Cochran of Luling and the Rapides Wildlife Association.

Their posters were among thousands entered in local National Hunting and Fishing Day poster contests sponsored by sportsmen's clubs, civic organizations and schools throughout the

country. In addition to local prizes, there were 52 national awards totaling \$5,200 in U.S. Savings Bonds for youngsters who best illustrated the contest theme "Sportsmen and Conservation Working Together."

The 1982 National Hunting and Fishing Day poster contest was sponsored by the National Shooting Sports Foundation. The contest is held annually and is designed to foster an increased awareness of the need for conservation and the role sportsmen play in America's conservation efforts.

For information about the 1983 National Hunting and Fishing Day poster contest, open to all students in grades 5-12, contact NHF Day Headquarters, Box 1075, Riverside, Connecticut 06878.

### **Baton Rougeans Enjoy Treasures on the Levee**

Over fifty-eight wildflowers and plants growing along the Mississippi River between the I-10 bridge and Florida St. in downtown Baton Rouge can be found and easily identified through a new booklet entitled *Treasures on the Baton Rouge Levee*.

The book, by Baton Rouge high school teacher Jackie Mattice, identifies common species that are also easily seen in city yards and country roadsides in southeast Louisiana. The guide is designed for students and naturalists and is self-explanatory to serve as an aid to individuals, scout troupes, campfire girls, church youth groups and others studying nature.

The book contains color and black and white photographs taken by the author plus drawings sketched by her with assistance from Audubon Society president John O'Neill and Eugene Beckham, vice president and Louisiana State Naturalist. Also included is a map of the study site broken down into eight different areas with each plant coded to area for easy identification. There is also a timetable listing the months and the plants expected to be blooming in each of them.

The first naturalist guide to the wildflowers and plants on the Baton Rouge levee is endorsed by the Baton Rouge Audubon Society, the Baton Rouge Sierra Club, and the Baton Rouge Garden Club. Individual copies can be obtained from "Treasures on the Baton Rouge Levee", P.O. Box 65164, Baton Rouge, LA 70896. Group rates for 25 or more copies are also available. *Treasures on the Baton Rouge Levee* is carried by some local book stores.

## Motorboat Registration Special Notice

To abide by United States Coast Guard regulations, the procedure for motorboat registration described in the last issue of Louisiana Conservationist (November/December 1982, p. 28-29) has been revised.

It was stated that the new decals being issued for Louisiana motorboats would be accepted in lieu of the certificate of registration by enforcement officers inspecting boats. To comply with federal regulations, however, the Coast Guard requires that the certificate of registration be *kept aboard the motorboat*, available for inspection upon request.

The new decals, provided by Act 444 of the Regular Session of the 1982 Louisiana Legislature, are being sent by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to all persons who apply for motorboat registration or renewal beginning this year. It is estimated that it will take three years for all boats presently registered in Louisiana to display the decals.

Two decals are being mailed in the same envelope with the certificate of registration. It is important that motorboat operators properly affix a decal to each side of their boat, within six

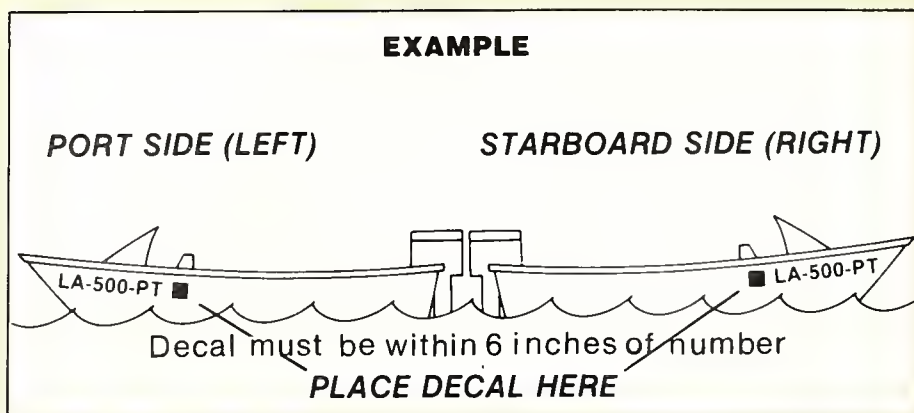


inches of the boat numbers as shown in the illustration. They must be sure also to keep the certificate of registration aboard the boat, available for inspection; the decal alone will not be acceptable.

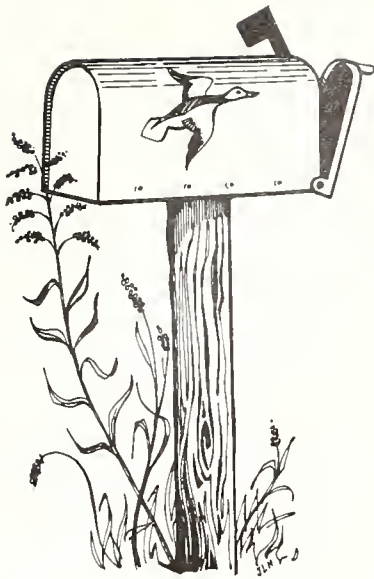
Due to Coast Guard requirements that decal colors be uniform in all states, the Louisiana 1983 decals will be international orange, not green as indicated in last month's Conservationist.

## MOUNTING INSTRUCTIONS

1. APPLY ONLY TO CLEAN, DRY, SMOOTH, WAX-FREE SURFACE AT MODERATE TEMPERATURE.
2. REMOVE BACKING FROM DECAL AND HOLD TOP OF EMBLEM IN PLACE. FIRMLY PRESS INTO PLACE AND SMOOTH DOWN FROM TOP TO BOTTOM MAKING SURE NO BUBBLES APPEAR.



**EXPIRES LAST DAY OF MONTH PUNCHED AND YEAR SHOWN**



## "WE GET LETTERS..."

### Louisiana Supports Ducks Unlimited

As a trustee and an avid supporter of Ducks Unlimited, I was pleased to read your comments concerning Ducks Unlimited in the September-October *Louisiana Conservationist*.

Louisiana has always been right on top in Ducks Unlimited contributions; third nationally in 1981. However, there is one statistic that bothers me greatly. Estimating 130,000 licenses or duck stamps sold and then dividing that into the \$2,026,000 that Ducks Unlimited chapters statewide contributed only averages \$15.58 per person; this amount includes regular members, sponsors, life sponsors, etc.

Since Louisiana is one of the top three beneficiary states of the Ducks Unlimited effort, the amount is pitifully small when compared to some of the other states that never winter a fraction of the ducks that Louisiana does. For example, the following lists the top ten states for dollars sent to Ducks Unlimited per duck stamp sold. Note that some of these states benefit from the Ducks Unlimited effort far less than Louisiana. According to these figures, the more ducks a state has the less they contribute. Arkansas, Texas and California are not even on the list.

#### Top 10—Dollars per Duck Stamp

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Georgia        | \$46.53 |
| North Carolina | \$38.08 |
| South Carolina | \$36.01 |
| Mississippi    | \$32.35 |
| Virginia       | \$27.50 |
| Alabama        | \$27.03 |
| Nevada         | \$26.16 |
| West Virginia  | \$25.66 |
| Delaware       | \$25.01 |
| Florida        | \$24.70 |

As you can see, the Ducks Unlimited effort is not known to many Louisiana hunters. I will wager that any successful hunter's bag will always include ducks that were raised on some Ducks Unlimited project in Canada.

Mother Nature has been helped tremendously by these projects. If Louisiana did as well as Georgia, we would send over \$6,000,000.00 to D.U. More money, more projects, more ducks.

We will never realize what our name implies but we could come close to truly having "ducks unlimited" if our Louisiana hunters would support the effort.

Carl W. Jones  
Shreveport

*Thank you for your letter regarding Secretary Jesse J. Guidry's recent editorial about Ducks Unlimited and its fine works in Canada.*

*The statistics contained in your letter are extremely thought-provoking and may drive home to many of our waterfowlers that Louisiana has been especially blessed when it comes to unexcelled duck hunting.*

*We appreciate your interest in sharing this information.* —Editor

### Fry the Whole Frog

In your article "Fetchin' Frogs" (July-August) you insinuated (did not specifically mention) that only the "hind-legs" of a frog are suitable for the palate of a sportsman gourmet. That is tantamount to killing a deer and only taking the hind quarters and loin. To us "bone meat" gourmets you advocate discarding the tastiest morsels. The forelegs and ribcage are really delicious and I recommend to "Pie" Pendley that she fry the whole frog, intact.

Thanks for a great magazine.

A Sportsman Gourmet  
Ray Ryan  
Hessmer, LA

### Nature Conservancy

We the people of Louisiana are going to have to unite and buy back some of our woodland habitat before the developers pile the rest of it up for burning. I can't imagine Louisiana without any trees but it's happening. The woods are part of our heritage...

We need a Nature Conservancy chapter in Louisiana. They buy land to be held in its natural form. The Nature Conservancy sometimes donates land back to the state to be held for the public. We need our trees. Does anyone know how to organize us?

C. Reaux  
Lafayette

*You are correct in your belief that the Nature Conservancy plays an important role in the preservation of wildlife habitat. To date, this national conservation organization has been responsible for the preservation of 1,881,598 acres of forests, marshes, prairies, mountains, and islands. In Louisiana, the Nature Conservancy was active in the recent donation of 12,809 acres by the Joyce Foundation (see article p. 14 this issue).*

*For information on this membership, non-profit organization, contact The Nature Conservancy, 1800 North Kent Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209. Members receive a bimonthly publication. The Nature Conservancy News.*

*On a state level, a similar but separate organization exists with the primary objective of saving the Tensas Bottomland Hardwood Tract, 100,000 acres in northeast Louisiana. More information on the efforts of this group can be obtained from the Tensas Conservancy Coalition, P.O. Drawer 1367, Shreveport, LA 71164.*

*It is the interest of individuals like yourself that is vital to the future of lands available for wildlife habitat.*

—Editor

### Backyard Pests

I have been enjoying the many articles you publish and always the inviting recipes you offer for the delicious seafood and ducks.

I was greatly impressed with the article "Backyard Pests" (September-October 1982) by Mr. David E. John. Although I haven't encountered many of the animals and reptiles specified, those who do encounter them will be safer for it.

H. A. Kluge  
New Orleans

# Pie's Potpourri

By Marian  
"Pie" Pendley

Photography By Lloyd Poissenot



## Smoked Venison Roast

8-10 lb. venison roast

½ cup salt

4 tablespoons black pepper

3 tablespoons red pepper

¼ cup vinegar

Wash venison carefully and trim any fat or cartilage. Make small slits in meat with knife about 2 inches apart and 1 inch deep all over roast. Make a paste of remaining ingredients and stuff each opening with a tiny bit of the seasoning. Rub remaining mixture over outside of roast. Place in airtight container and refrigerate for 24 to 48 hours, turning over 3 or 4 times. When ready to cook, place on spit over coals and smoke approximately 4 to 5 hours. When done, wrap in foil to hold juices and keep warm until serving.

## Venison Cubes

Cut venison in cubes about 1-inch square. Season with salt, pepper, Worcestershire sauce, and a little sherry.

Marinate 8-10 hours in refrigerator; turning occasionally.

To cook—remove from marinade and dredge in flour and then dip in flour and milk batter (¾ cup milk and ½ cup flour). Deep fry in peanut oil, but do not over-cook or the meat will be tough. Makes great appetizers!

## Hot Curried Fruit

1 16 oz. can peach halves

1 16 oz. can pear halves

1 15¼ oz. can pineapple chunks

1 tablespoon cornstarch

2 tablespoons brown sugar

1 teaspoon curry powder

1 16 oz. jar spiced apple rings, drained

Drain peaches, pears, and pineapple, reserving juices. Pour juice into a medium saucepan. Combine cornstarch, sugar, and curry powder and stir into fruit juice. Cook over medium heat until mixture begins to thicken, stirring occasionally. Stir all fruit into hot

mixture and cook until thoroughly heated. Serve hot. Good with wild ducks or game.

## Squirrel Fricassee

Skin and clean the squirrels. Wash well and cut into pieces at the joints.

Mix the following together:

1 cup flour

1 tablespoon powdered marjoram

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon red pepper

Put the flour mixture in a paper bag and shake each piece of squirrel in it until thoroughly coated with flour.

Heat about 2 tablespoons oil and 2 tablespoons butter in a heavy frying pan. Cook the pieces of squirrel until browned all over. Pour off any excess fat. Add ¾ cup of sherry. Cover and let simmer for about an hour. Make a sauce with liquid remaining in pan.

